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UNCLAS HARARE 001383

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO AFRICA;  
HARARE

11. Under headline "Bush must tell Mbeki to act decisively on Zimbabwe" the July 8 edition of the independent daily "The Daily News" printed an op-ed by Joseph Whande on page 8, in which he urges President George Bush to help resolve the socioeconomic and political impasse in Zimbabwe by encouraging his South African counterpart Thabo Mbeki to "uphold internationally accepted mediation practices." Excerpts:
12. ". . . Both George Bush and Thabo Mbeki must be warned not to continue using Zimbabwe as a playground where international norms, laws, human rights and other practices are disregarded at will. This has to stop and Bush must make it clear to Mbeki that if he does not want to uphold internationally accepted mediation practices, he should leave the Zimbabwean issue to people who would like to resolve the problem. . . Bush must take note that if he relies too much on Mbeki, he will not get anything resolved in Zimbabwe. He must be reminded that the people of Zimbabwe have long lamented how Mbeki is a stumbling block to our own efforts to correct the bad situation in our country. . . Apart from Mbeki's cowardice in confronting Mugabe, what we are seeing is a deliberate policy by South Africa to strengthen their economy at our expense. . . We have a problem here in Zimbabwe and it is not an exaggeration that people are suffering needlessly under our Mugabe. Many would like to see him go. But if your solution to our problems is the same as the one you applied in Iraq, then please forget it. We are peace-loving people and we only need the kind of assistance that will make it possible and easier for us to resolve our problems peacefully. The person you should get tough with is Mbeki. Make him play his role as responsible regional leader, a role befitting the president of South Africa. As you talk to our dictators around the continent, please keep in mind that you do not incite us to stand up and fight for our rights then fly back home and watch as we get butchered. Tackling Africa's dictators is a full-time job that needs the participation of the international community. . . ."

SULLIVAN